

Mentoring programs begin with you

A mentor is defined by Webster as a “wise, loyal advisor” or a “teacher or coach.” I’m sure all of you have either had a mentor at one time or another or know someone who is being mentored. I believe most would agree having a mentor would be a plus for anyone’s career; however, interest in the formal mentoring program established at the 179th has been minimal at best.

I occasionally hear a comment that our people are not being mentored. This last comment baffles me because I would hope we would never turn down anyone’s request to be mentored. So, how do we ensure our people receive the benefits of a “wise, loyal advisor or coach” to help them reach their career goals? I believe the answer begins with the individual and their desire to be mentored. With as busy as we all are deploying around the world and still doing our best to keep up with training and other tasks here at home, it probably seems like there isn’t much time left for things like mentoring. But, there is time if you really believe mentoring is right for you...because mentoring “starts” with YOU! Yes, I said you, because it’s you that must indicate an interest in being mentored by sitting down with your supervisor or someone like our Command Chief Kohler who will take the time



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to enter you into the mentoring program. If your first attempt doesn’t work, don’t give up. Ask again or talk to someone else in the chain-of-command. Maybe you’re a person that just isn’t interested in entering a formal mentoring program. Well, there are a lot of other ways to receive the benefits of mentoring. First, there’s the feedback program which each of you should be participating in at least once per year. During that session, make sure you and your supervisor discuss all the aspects

of your performance and career that will help you achieve your goals. You can also ask your friends and co-workers the questions you need answers to or how they went about achieving their goals. Every bit of information helps. The formula for a successful career in the Air National Guard isn’t all that difficult. Here is my wise and loyal advice, learned from more than 30 years in the military. First, learn your job and do it to the best of your ability. It’s often said the best way to a promotion or better job is doing your best at the job you have now. Next, complete your Professional Military Education (PME) before you have time-in-grade for your next promotion. I know we’re all very busy, but not having your PME completed just might make the difference between your being selected for that job you always wanted. Next, make your career goals known to your supervisor and seek those other career broadening experiences that will enhance your resume. It might be a training course, an additional duty or special project. Demonstrating initiative and showing you can accomplish a difficult task will always be noticed. Finally, be a team player. Getting along with others and working together to accomplish the mission is always important. Remember, “Together we succeed.”

By: Chief Dick Rowland
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America has long been a land based on the idea that everyone, no matter what his or her background, could rise, succeed and accomplish their dreams.

No attacks by haters of freedom have ever derailed that idea and they never will. We as Americans all remain steadfastly committed to the idea of fair treatment for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or any difference other than ability to do the job.

It is for this reason, even in the aftermath of the dastardly September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade

Center and the Pentagon, we in the National Guard are going to stay with our plan to celebrate 2002 as our Year of Diversity.

The Year of Diversity is precisely that — a celebration. We celebrate the fact our National Guard consists of all types of people. the world. This vast array of differences brings to our force a variety of experiences and perspectives that are a strength for the National Guard. The entire American military establishment is in a process of transformation. The armed forces are transforming to more effectively address the new and different enemies that oppose our nation in the 21st century.

Part of that transformation is to broaden our thinking. We must find new solutions to new problems. We must think “outside of the box” while leveraging traditional strengths. To do that, we have to be able to tap in to a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives. That is why diversity in our force is a strategic asset.

I encourage each and every one of us to work hard during the year of diversity to keep this in mind. The next time you encounter someone with a different background, a different opinion, a different perspective than you have, stop for a minute and recognize that difference as a source of strength for the National Guard and for America.